

Message Text

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ACTION NSF-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 OES-03 ABF-01 FS-01

AGR-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01

HEW-02 HUD-01 INR-07 INT-05 LOC-01 NASA-01 NSAE-00

OMB-01 SMI-01 TRSE-00 AID-05 IGA-01 /067 W

----- 072994

R 241235Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8546

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

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PASS NSF FOR SELCUK

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, OSCI, TGEN, TS

SUBJ: NSF/SFCP GEOTECHNICAL RESEARCH PROJECT AT ENIT

GRANT OIP-7503687

REF: STATE 40044

1. DR. LATIRI SIGNED AND RETURNED ORIGINAL OF GRANT INSTRUMENT FOR SUBJECT PROJECT ON MAR 7, 1975. HOWEVER, HE ALSO ATTACHED COPY OF MAR 6 LETTER TO DR. SELCUK OF NSF, EXPRESSING HIS VIEWS ON MECHANICS OF PAYMENT FOR GRANT. THESE INCLUDED CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PAYMENTS TO BE MADE WHICH WERE CONTRARY TO AUTHORIZATION TRANSMITTED REFTEL. EMBASSY BROUGHT DIFFERENCES TO LATIRI'S ATTENTION AND ASKED WHETHER, IN ORDER EXPEDITE PAYMENT FOR ENIT PROJECT, EMBASSY COULD PROCESS AUTHORIZATIONS IN HAND FOR BOTH ENIT AND FOR SHERIF PENDING DECISION BY NSF IN REGARD LATIRI RECOMMENDATIONS. ALTHOUGH LATIRI REQUESTED THAT PAYMENTS BE DELAYED UNTIL HE HAD COMMUNICATED FURTHER DETAILS TO EMBASSY, WHEN THIS INFORMATION

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NOT RECEIVED, EMBASSY PROCEEDED TO PROCESS VOUCHERS AND

TRANSMITTED THEM TO REGIONAL FINANCE CTNER PARIS MAR 17
AS AUTHORIZED STATE 40044. NOT CERTAIN WHETHER LATIRI
WILL ACCEPT THIS PAYMENT.

2. EMBASSY SUBSEQUENTLY RECEIVED SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS
LETTER FROM LATIRI DATED MAR 17 (COPY BEING POUCHED TO
SELCUK OF NSF) INTENDED TO CLARIFY HIS MAR 7 LETTER.
AMONG MANY POINTS MADE IN LETTER, LATIRI EXPRESSED OPINION
THAT DR. SHERIF IS NOT EMPOWERED "TO MANAGE DIRECTLY ALL
OR PART OF THE FUNDS" AND THAT ONLY ENIT AND THE EMBASSY
ARE "ACCREDITED AGENTS TO MANAGE FUNDS (BOTH NSF DINARS
AND AID/OST DOLLAR FUNDS) RELATIVE TO PROJECT." LETTER
ALSO PROPOSES DIFFERENT DIVISION OF ADVANCE PAYMENTS THAN
THAT AUTHORIZED REFTTEL, AS FOLLOWS: 7,500 DINARS (INSTEAD
OF 13,950) BY EMBASSY FOR SHERIF AND ISHIBASH (ONLY) AND
69,700 DINARS (INSTEAD OF 62,300) FOR EQUIPMENT AND LOCAL
STAFF TO ENIT. (WE NOTE LATIRI TOTAL IS 77,200 DINARS.)

3. COMMENT: PART OF DIFFICULTY IS THAT LATIRI CONTINUES
TO VIEW AMERICAN PERSONNEL OF THIS PROJECT AS "TUNISIAN
CIVIL SERVANTS" UNDER HIS DIRECTION DURING THEIR STAY IN
TUNISIA AND WISHES TO CONTROL LEVEL OF FUNDS THEY CAN
OBTAIN. WE UNDERSTAND HIS REDUCTION IN FUNDS TO BE PAID
TO SHERIF IS BASED UPON HIS CALCULATIONS OF LENGTH OF
TIME HE AND DR. ISHIBASHI WILL BE IN TUNISIA WORKING
DIRECTLY ON PROJECT AND UPON FACT THAT LATIRI WISHES TO BE
RESPONSIBLE FOR HIRING ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF FOR PROJECT
FROM HIS PART OF FUNDS. WHILE LATIRI HAS STATED
SEPARATELY THAT HE WISHES EMBASSY TO MAKE PERIODIC SALARY
PAYMENTS TO SHERIF AND ISHIBASH IN ORDER TO AVOID
DIFFICULTIES WITH TUNISIAN INCOME TAX OFFICIALS, EMBASSY
HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT CAN ONLY MAKE INDIVIDUAL PAYMENTS
TO SHERIF AS AUTHORIZED BY NSF AND THAT THESE PAYMENTS BY
EMBASSY IN NO WAY AFFECT THEIR STATUS IN REGARD TO
POSSIBLE TUNISIAN TAX OBLIGATIONS.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE NSF'S VIEWS AS
QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE ON BOTH LATIRI LETTERS, PARTICULARLY
IN REGARD TO WHETHER EMBASSY SHOULD DELIVER CHECKS OR
OBTAIN NEW PAYMENT AUTHORIZATIONS IF NSF AGREES TO LATIRI
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DEMANDS.

5. IN HIS LETTER TO EMBASSY, LATIRI ALSO REQUESTS INFOR-
MATION ON STATUS OF AID/OST CONSIDERATION OF GRANT TO HELP
SUPPORT PROJECT.
SEELYE

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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